

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #2581-83
6 April 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : David Y. McManis
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT : NIO Monthly Warning Assessments: March

1. The reports on the NIO warning meetings are attached.
2. Comments on warning situation.

a. USSR

(1) The Soviet leadership appears to be preparing a concerted drive to block INF deployment late this year or, failing this, to mount a strong reaction to initial deployments. The mid-March meeting in Moscow of senior Central Committee secretaries from the seven Warsaw Pact countries and from Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, and Mongolia probably was used by the Soviets to detail their plans and coordinate their allies' roles in executing the drive. The meeting issued a statement warning that INF deployment would have "decisive significance" not just for Europe but for "the whole of our planet."

(2) This meeting was followed by Gromyko's promotion to first deputy prime minister, a move apparently designed in part to strengthen his authority in directing a concerted bloc campaign against INF.

(3) The Soviets have not developed earlier hints regarding likely reactions, but Andropov's harsh reply to President Reagan's address on 23 March and Gromyko's blunt rejection of the President's proposal for an interim INF agreement strongly imply that the Soviets intend to maintain an unyielding

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stance in INF negotiations in the belief that public resistance to deployment will force Western European governments, particularly West Germany, to press for a postponement before the end of the year.

b. Jordan-PLO-Syria

(1) If King Hussein and Arafat reach an agreement authorizing Hussein to enter negotiations with Israel, Syria and Syrian-supported Palestinian factions may attempt to sabotage the initiative and disrupt plans for an Arab League summit in mid-April.

(2) If the Arab League endorses a joint Jordanian-PLO negotiating initiative despite Syrian and radical Palestinian opposition, the Begin government probably would move quickly to derail the initiative. At the very least, the Israelis would reject it on the ground that it deviates from the Camp David accords and insist that Hussein accept Camp David as a precondition to negotiations. Alternatively, the Israelis might provoke a clash with Syrian and Palestinian forces in Lebanon or announce a further expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank in an attempt to force Hussein and Arafat to withdraw their initiative.

c. Nicaragua-Honduras

(1) Although Nicaraguan officials have played down the threat posed by the infiltration of Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) personnel from Honduras, they admit that any Honduran military involvement would alter the situation, "with unforeseeable developments."

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(2) The Sandinista regime does not appear to be preparing for military retaliation against Honduras, and it probably prefers to avoid a potentially dangerous escalation in the near future. This policy could change, however, if the FDN scores embarrassing gains and particularly if Eden Pastora carries out his plan to launch a guerrilla campaign in southern Nicaragua in mid-April.

(3) Another factor that may cause the Sandinistas to adopt a more threatening stance toward Honduras would be large-scale defections of Sandinista troops in response to FDN appeals.

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(4) In the meantime, the Sandinistas are preparing a justification for military reprisals against Honduras.

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If the Sandinistas decide to increase pressure on Honduras, they may provoke more border clashes, such as the exchange of fire at El Espino on the western border in late March, and use these encounters to demand a total cessation of Honduran support for the FDN.

d. El Salvador

(1) Defense Minister Garcia's maneuvers to retain his post are having a debilitating effect on the armed forces' ability to prosecute the war, and they may prompt his military opponents to take direct action to oust him in the next few weeks. A move by Garcia to transfer Air Force Chief Bustillo overseas could precipitate a showdown.

(2) Tensions in the military have increased the insurgents' confidence in their ability to establish permanent "liberated territories" in Morazan and Chalatenango departments. The guerrillas are preparing to launch attacks near the capital from their stronghold on Guazapa volcano.

e. Vietnam-Kampuchea-Thailand

(1) Although the Vietnamese dry season offensive has captured a major DK base at Phnom Chat and Sihanouk's main base, the Vietnamese do not appear to be preparing for major incursions into Thailand before the rainy season begins next month. Vietnam's principal objective seems to be to disrupt DK and non-Communist resistance capabilities to conduct infiltration and sabotage in central Kampuchea during the rainy season and to demonstrate to China and the ASEAN governments that Vietnam is fully capable of maintaining its position that the situation in Kampuchea is "irreversible."

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(2) There remains a marginal possibility that Thai reactions to the Vietnamese offensive will trigger a military escalation along the border.

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David Y. McManis

Attachments:

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